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Dubbing

Citation for published version:

Bosseaux, C 2018, Dubbing. in L Pérez-González (ed.), *The Routledge Handbook of Audiovisual Translation Studies*. The Routledge Handbook of Audiovisual Translation Studies, Routledge.

Link:

[Link to publication record in Edinburgh Research Explorer](#)

Document Version:

Peer reviewed version

Published In:

The Routledge Handbook of Audiovisual Translation Studies

Publisher Rights Statement:

This is an Accepted Manuscript of a book chapter published by Routledge in The Routledge Handbook of Audiovisual Translation Studies on [date of publication], available online: <https://www.routledge.com/The-Routledge-Handbook-of-Audiovisual-Translation-1st-Edition/Perez-Gonzalez/p/book/9781138859524>.

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Investigating Dubbing: looking to the past, looking forward to the future

1. INTRODUCTION

Dubbing, the process of re-recording the soundtrack of an original audiovisual (AV) text with a new one in the Target Language, has been practised for many years all over the world. In terms of semiotic composition, it is an example of 'isosemiotic' translation as information is conveyed via the same semiotic channels in the Source and Target Texts (Gottlieb 2005:4). As we will see in this chapter there is a vast amount of studies on dubbing even if there is still room for further investigation. This chapter specifically considers dubbing research by providing an overview of how this AVT mode has developed since it was first used when sound was introduced in cinema. This presentation will be divided into three main sections. We first start with a history of dubbing, then its main current issues will be discussed with an indication of the research methods used by scholars and a consideration of the influence of technology on dubbing practice and research. The third section focuses on future trajectories of dubbing research and its new debates. The chapter concludes with an end of summary section, a list of related topics in this volume, a reference list and suggestions for further reading.

2. A HISTORY OF DUBBING

The history of dubbing has been discussed in some details, for instance in Izard 1992 and Chaume 2012, and the present volume also contains a chapter on the history of AVT. This first section should therefore be read in conjunction with the aforementioned chapter to get a full picture of how dubbing fits in and has developed within AVT.

Dubbing has been used and studied for many years all over the world, as illustrated in Chaume (2012: 6–10), who presents a ‘global map of dubbing’ in Europe, Asia, the Americas, Africa and Oceania. For instance, dubbing is commonly used in Austria, Belgium, Brazil, China, the Czech Republic, Germany, France, Hungary, India, Iran, Italy, Japan, Korea, Peru, Slovakia, Spain and Turkey. It is ‘one of the oldest modes’ of AVT whose ‘origins can be traced back to the late 1920s’ (Chaume 2012: 1). Indeed, it is when ‘written language on screen in silent movies’ in the form of intertitles was introduced ‘to accompany the iconic representation of images’ that translation became ‘essential to the full understanding of filmic narration’ (2012: 10). In the late 1920s, dialogue began to be introduced into films, referred to as talkies. However even before this change, translation was deemed important by famous directors; for instance, ‘as early as 1923, David W Griffith noted that only 5 per cent of the world’s population then spoke English and rhetorically wondered why he had to lose 95 per cent of his potential audience’ (Chaume 2012: 11).

Thus, when talkies appeared, they prompted the need for different types of translation, from the translation of intertitles to dubbing and subtitling – initially into French, German and Spanish (Izard 1992). In each of these cases, translation formed part of the post-production process. As noted in Chaume (2004a and 2012), foreign audiences did not react positively to translation and in the 1930s, a new solution was introduced: multiple film versions. Translation became an integral part of the production process; the same director would make the same film in two or three different languages (e.g. French, German and Spanish) using the same actors, although on occasion the actors might be changed if additional languages were involved. One can imagine that such a venture proved very costly and after a few years, when dubbing and subtitling

techniques had become more developed, the translation of films was once again relegated to the distribution process, where it remains to this day. This state of affairs is important to emphasise and we shall see later in the third section of this chapter, on new debates and future trajectory, why the current situation, i.e. dubbing being part of the distribution process, might be detrimental to AV products and what alternatives scholars are suggesting.

Depending on the countries where it is performed, there are different reasons why dubbing has been preferred over subtitling, although the situation is not monolithic and even dubbing countries such as Brazil, France or India are increasingly using subtitling with fansubbing practices for instance. Until recently there was a debate over which mode is better, as discussed for instance in the introduction of Luyken *et al* (1991) and Díaz Cintas (2004), but this debate has now been dismissed by scholars for being obsolete since the reasons for having one or the other are varied (e.g. economical, historical, political factors etc.) and advances in technology, as we shall see in section three, have changed and are still changing the AVT landscape.

Going back to the reasons behind choosing this mode, in the first instance, dubbing has been discussed in terms of censorship and manipulation in particular in relation to Spain, Italy and Germany (see for instance Danan 1991). Dubbing practices have mostly been considered in terms of habits. We are told that audiences from dubbing countries like Spain, Germany, Italy and France ‘prefer’ dubbing because they are used to it: in Spain, for instance, dubbing was imposed as a manipulation device under Franco, but is still the norm nowadays based on audience habits. By mentioning censorship we are already touching on an important area of dubbing research. The next sections will

therefore examine dubbing research in more detail through the current issues dealt with by translation scholars.

3. MAIN CURRENT ISSUES

This section presents studies on dubbing dealing with various themes, including works on translational norms or conventions in the target culture, the translation of ideological and cultural elements (e.g. Danan 1991, Richart Marset 2012, Ballester 2001), the translation of humour (e.g. Zabalbeascoa 1996a, 1996b, 2005, Vandaele 2002, Chiaro 2006, Martínez-Sierra 2008), dialects (e.g. Di Giovanni, Diodati, & Franchini 1994, Dore 2009, Parini 2009) and censorship (e.g. Agost 1999, Merino *et al.* 2005, Ranzato 2011 and 2012). It is unfortunately not possible to cover all these in the present chapter. This is why this section will aim at giving readers an overview of the themes and issues currently dealt with by scholars as well as the research methods used in these studies.

Dubbing is an example of constrained translation, i.e. there is more than the linguistic code to take into consideration. It is therefore not surprising that much of the initial research into dubbing in the late 1980s predominantly emphasized media constraints in dubbing, particularly synchronization (e.g. lip-synchronization). Technical constraints linked to the different types of synchronization, have been studied from a research angle in various subfields of AVT, particularly in Multimodality, Sociolinguistics and Linguistic Variation and I invite readers to consult these chapters in the present volume to obtain supplementary information. Additionally, various themes and challenges have attracted the attention of scholars greatly contributing to the expansion of existing knowledge on dubbing. In what follows, the emphasis will be on how these studies have

contributed to the development of the dubbing field identifying strengths and limitations of the current research landscape.

Like other AVT modes, dubbing has been primarily studied using a Descriptive Translation Studies framework, for instance Karamitroglou (2000) in the Greek context, Goris (1993) in the French context, Ballester (2001) and Elena Sanz Ortega in Spain (2015), and in Italy, Pavesi (2009). These studies have been and still are important when shedding light on the socio-historical contexts in which dubbing is performed, highlighting target text norms, the status of source and target cultures, and strategies used by translators. However, most of these studies have been performed in Western Europe and dubbing research would greatly benefit from studies conducted outside of this geographical location.

When it comes to the constraints of dubbing, Chaume (2012) distinguishes six aspects or ‘priorities that must be taken into account in a standard dubbing with the concept of ideal receiver in mind’ (2012: 15). These criteria are acceptable lip-sync, credible and realistic lines of dialogue, coherence between images and words, loyal translation, clear sound quality and acting. Therefore when researching dubbing, many scholars have considered the constraints inherent to the dubbing process. Emphasis has been put specifically on synchronisation, which is defined in its largest sense as a process consisting of ‘matching the target language translation and the articulatory and mouth movements of the screen actors and actresses, and ensuring that the utterances and pauses in the translation match those of the source text’ (Chaume 2012: 68). There are three types of synchronisation. The first one, *lip* or *phonetic synchrony* (a term used by Fodor 1976), consists of ‘adapting the translation to the articulatory movements of the

on-screen characters, especially in close-ups and extreme close-ups' (Chaume 2012: 68). The second one, *kinesic synchrony*, is 'the synchronisation of the translation with the actors' body movements' (ibid.: 69) and the third one, '*isochrony*', corresponds to the 'synchronisation of the duration of the translation with the screen characters' utterances (Chaume drawing from Whitman-Linsen 1992: 28). These three synchronies have been discussed at length by Agost 1999, Chaume 2004c, 2012, Chaves 2000, Fodor 1976, Goris 1993, Luyken *et al* 1991, Mayoral *et al.* 1988, and Whitman Linsen 1992. For instance, lip-synchronization, i.e. matching labio-dental and bilabial consonants or open vowels in close-ups. In terms of close-ups, for instance, Chaume (2012: 74) notes that phonetic equivalence takes precedence over semantic or pragmatic equivalence as one needs to find a word which will match the mouth movement as opposed to a synonym or a similar word in the translation. When it comes to kinesic synchrony, it may be that a kinesic sign (i.e. body language) is performed as the character speaks, e.g. pointing to an object onscreen or leaving the room. If the translation needs to be shortened and certain words are considered redundant, these may be substituted or omitted. Ideally, changes in semantic meaning should not affect the way we perceive characters, i.e. characterization, or the overall meaning of the audiovisual product. Finally, when trying to achieve isochrony, one must bear in mind that certain vocabulary choices could end up having an impact on characterization if, for instance, they carry negative connotations. Take for instance the word 'chick', which can be used to talk about a young woman but carries negative connotations. If this word were to be used instead of the more neutral 'girl' it would portray negatively the character using it. One must however remember that synchronization is not merely a concern for dubbing; it is also an integral part of original AV products, in which context it is called sound

post-synchronization. Sound in films is usually not natural, i.e. the background noises that can be heard are usually recorded after the film has been shot. In most cases, this is done by Foley artists who recreate ambient sounds in a realistic way, e.g. the sound of sizzling bacon is used to imitate rain and that of roaring lions for car engines¹. Adapters work with an international version or track which only has music, sound effects and background noises (Chaume 2007). Consequently, they can only work on the dialogue and not on the rest of the soundtrack, which would include songs or background noises such as a TV channel playing while characters are speaking..

Another type of synchronization worth mentioning when considering dubbing and its challenges is 'character synchrony' (Whitman-Linsen 1992) which corresponds to the expectations of the target audience in terms of what a voice should sound like. Chaume comments that, 'in general, a child actor cannot be dubbed by an older male voice; a woman's voice must sound feminine; and the "baddie" must sound grave and sinister' (2012: 69–70). However, real life practices may not make it possible to give due consideration to these parameters, e.g. legal restrictions on children working. Very little has been written on the topic although Bosseaux's work on performance and characterization in dubbing (2015 and forthcoming 2018) provides insightful views on voice as being an integral part of a character's identity and on the importance of choosing appropriate voices.

When discussing synchronization, it is also essential to mention the notion of genre. Indeed, the extent to which synchronization is achieved depends on the genre and type of audiovisual material. Chaume emphasizes that a 'thorough application of all

¹ <http://filmsound.org/terminology/foley.htm>

synchronization types is required for the television series genre, although the degree of perfection is not as high as that demanded by the big screen' (2012: 76). Indeed, films require a high quality of all types of synchronization since mismatches could lead to a dubbed film's negative reception and failure in the box office. Cartoons are also 'more flexible because of their young audience, who are more likely to miss such aspects (Chaume 2004c: 46). Finally, in relation to constraints and particularly that of lip-synch, it must be emphasised that the above mentioned constraints are not the mere outcome of objective medial restrictions but that they have been enforced by the film industry to impose the linear narrative patterns of Classical Hollywood cinema. This is highlighted by Pérez-González (2007) who draws on the work of Mowitt (2004). It would be interesting to see other researchers exploring this avenue since constraints have been discussed at length but other alternatives in dubbing practice have not yet been suggested; for instance in terms of genres, e.g. cartoons, advertisements, films, television series and documentaries since we are told that they demand different levels of synchronisation.

Having presented works on constraints let me now turn to a presentation of the various agents involved in the dubbing production chain in order to lay emphasis on the complexity of the dubbing process as well as the challenges of dubbing research. A dubbing product is the result of the work of many people: translators, dialogue writers, dubbing directors, actors and sound engineers. Chaume highlights how 'Western European dubbing workflows' follow a specific 'production chain' (2012: 29): in general dubbing companies first send the text to translators who produce a rough translation and sometimes also do the dialogue writing. When translating and dialogue writing is done by different individuals, dialogue writers are responsible for the following tasks:

lip-sync, symbols, takes and making the text sounds like oral discourse. If all these tasks are not carried out by dialogue writers they are taken over by dubbing assistants. The text then goes back to the dubbing company which is in charge of the artistic and technical side of the production. This is when the dubbing director takes over finding dubbing actors (also known as dubbing artists, dubbers or voice talents). Chaume emphasizes that the success of a dubbed product is dependent on choosing the right voices (2012: 36). However, it is never possible to fully control the reactions of viewers and it is not uncommon to read criticism online or in the press regarding dubbing choices. Directors also assist voice talents throughout the dubbing process, e.g. by giving them acting directions and telling them what happens in the film (voice talents do not have access to the whole film before they begin shooting, only to the loops or takes they are involved in). They record their takes in a dubbing booth, usually working alone or two at a time. This means that the film dialogue will be shot with one talent in one booth and another in a separate booth, with no turn-taking or responses to questions (or vice versa). Chaume also adds that the process is a 'continuous series of stops and starts, rather than a theatrical performance' (ibid.: 37). When the recording is finished, the sound engineers reassemble and edit the tracks, which have been dubbed separately. They are responsible for synchronizing the new dubbed tracks with the international track and the original images. The text is then edited and ready to go back to the TV channel or distributor (if it is a film for instance).

Voice talents thus work under the supervision of dubbing directors, as do sound technicians or engineers. Directors therefore perform a similar role to that of a film, TV series or theatrical director, and they have the power to modify the initial translator's and dialogue writer's words as they see fit. It can also happen that dubbing actors

change lines of dialogue if they feel that they do not fit the style of their acting.

Engineers also have their say when it comes to making changes to the translation.

From this account one can see that because dubbing involves so many participants it is clearly a mediated process: voice actors are guided throughout and the various agents have the capacity to make changes to what the translators and dialogue writers have produced. This situation has an obvious impact on research and scholars ought to consider the whole of the production chain when commenting on dubbing products.

There have been a few studies on the dubbing process in Europe, notably Chaume 2007 and 2012 who presents the chain of production in France, Italy, Germany and Spain, and Sanz Ortega (2015) who, when considering the effect of dubbing on plot and characterization in polyglot films, offers a thorough account of the dubbing process in Spain. However, even if Chaume concedes that the differences between countries are minimal (2012: 29–37), there are variations; for instance France has developed a specific synchronisation system called *la bande rythmo*, an added track containing dubbing symbols instructing actors when to start and stop speaking, which is only used there, and in Germany prices are determined based on the number of words whereas in Italy it is based on the number of reels. It would therefore be interesting to know what kind of impact this working situation and more generally ensuing working conditions have on dubbing products. We are lacking, for instance, studies on the status of translators, with the notable exception of Sanz Ortega (2015), dialogue writers and dubbing artists. We also need to know more about how dubbing is performed by professionals and fans in various countries or parts of the world, particularly in Asia,

Africa and Oceania, since different practices or traditions exist according to where dubbing is practiced or performed.

Additionally, even if constraints have been studied extensively, it is fair to say that sound quality and acting have been under-researched in AVT and Film Studies, perhaps because such studies go beyond the actual work of translators. This being said, the criterion of 'acting' is dealt with in Bosseaux (2015 and forthcoming 2018) from the perspective of performance and voice, and in Mingant (2010) as we shall see later on.

Another prolific research angle has been on the specificity of dubbing language. Chaume explains that 'what sets the linguistic code apart in audiovisual texts is that in films, television series, cartoons and certain advertisements, we are dealing with a written text that must seem oral and spontaneous' (2012: 100). As one can see from this quote, dubbing is considered to be a very specific type of discourse. Dubbed dialogue is a 'combination of linguistic features used both in spoken and written texts' (Chaume 2012: 81, drawing from Remael 2000; Chaume 2004a; Pérez-González 2007), although it can be seen more specifically as a simulation of spontaneous speech (Franzelli 2008: 225) as it mimics speech by using false starts, repetitions, ellipsis, pauses and interruptions. However, this orality is an illusion; it is 'préfabriquée' (Tomaszkiewicz 2001: 381) as it is 'actually planned, or as we might say feigned, false, prefabricated' (Chaume 2012: 82; see also Baños-Piñero 2009 and Baños-Piñero and Chaume 2009). This is because dialogue comes from a script 'written to be spoken as if not written' (Gregory and Carroll 1978: 42). This situation has also led scholars to talk about dialogue as 'secondary speech' (Remael 2003: 227).

Researchers have also emphasised that dubbed language has a specific sound to it; it does not sound like original dialogue. It 'does not correspond to the way normal people talk' (Whitman-Linsen 1992: 118) and in some instances, characters have been described as 'speak[ing] like printing pages' (Assis 2001: 216). The term 'dubbese', first coined by Maria Pavesi (1996), is now widely used to talk about dubbed language in particular as a 'culture-specific linguistic and stylistic model for dubbed texts' that is 'similar, but not equal to real oral discourse and external production oral discourse (i.e. original target-culture films, sitcoms, etc.)' (Chaume 2012: 87). Many other scholars have since followed Pavesi's lead, including Chaume (2004a), Baños-Piñero (2009), Marzà and Chaume (2009) and Freddi and Pavesi (2009).

According to Chaume, (dubbed) dialogue writing must meet the following three requirements: 'creating the effect of natural, credible and true-to-life dialogue', 'complying with lip-sync' and 'promot[ing] a balance which avoids overacting and underacting when dubbing actors perform the dialogues (i.e. avoiding cacophonies, etc.)' (2012: 88). These three criteria are not always met, however, a situation which Chaume refers to as the burden of dubbing, since it was 'consolidated at a time when imitating real spoken language was completely unacceptable' (2012: 91). Nevertheless, as Caillé (1960) points out, the ideal is that dubbing realistically conveys the 'content' of the human voice in order for it to be taken seriously by audiences. According to him, lip-synchronization should not be the sole important aspect to consider when dubbing, as it is only really necessary in the case of close-ups or big close-ups; rather, the emphasis should be on the rhythm, sensitivity, anger or tenderness conveyed by the original. Therefore, a dubbed version should endeavour to keep the 'savour' or taste of the original voice, since 'if the voices of actors are judiciously chosen, if the dubbed text is

judiciously translated, if it moves or entertains, we have succeeded' (1960: 107, my translation). I find Caillé's emphasis on voice, truly refreshing. Among other things, what this quote highlights is that, although translating linguistic elements and lip-synchronization are both important in dubbing, the choice of voices is one of the crucial factors in terms of audience appreciation.

Hence, even if there are works positing that it is important to maintain the qualities of the voices of the original actors (e.g. Mingant 2010, Bosseaux 2015 and forthcoming 2018, and Sanz Ortega 2015) more reception studies are needed to ascertain what the actual impact of voice attribution is in dubbed products. According to Chion, the source of the sound is normally understood to be what is seen on-screen – something which dubbing changes drastically. Drawing from Jean Renoir, Chion explains that 'accepting dubbing is like ceasing to believe in the oneness of the individual' (1985: 74, my translation). Indeed, in dubbing, the original body is separated from her original voice, even if dubbed films give the illusion that the voice and the body are working together. As Bosseaux points out a dubbed voice 'changes pitch, articulation, class, regional context, colloquialisms, individual turns of phrase, timbre, educational levels and other suggestions of cultural positions and capabilities' (2015: 69). It is thus worth wondering to what extent viewers engage differently based on changes in voice.

On the whole voice has generally been overlooked in dubbing research, a notable exception is Bosseaux (2015, forthcoming 2018) whose work is dedicated to understand what the effect of dubbing is on characterisation and performance with a strong focus on voice. Bosseaux explains for instance that in the French context, it is not uncommon for actors' voices to change from film to film. For instance, the American

actress Julianne Moore has had eleven French voices since the beginning of her career. One voice talent can also lend his or her voice to different foreign actors. For instance Isabelle Gardien, one of Moore's French voices, also gives her voice to Cate Blanchett, Emily Watson and Tilda Swinton. It is difficult, however, to comment on the significance of such changes in greater detail, since to this day no comprehensive experimental studies have been carried out on the way audiences perceive voices, i.e. change in voices for instance and the effect of having the same dubbing actor lending his or her voice to numerous foreign actors.

There are also very enlightening studies investigating geographic and social accents in dubbing, all highlighting the fact that rendering those is a thorny endeavour. For instance, Armstrong and Federici (eds, 2006) and Federici (ed. 2009) have compiled a solid collection of articles dealing with the challenges of regional, social and idiolectal varieties of language. Examples include the works of Ilaria Parini (2009), who explains how Italian-speaking gangsters or mafiosi in American films such as *Goodfellas* (Martin Scorsese, 1990) and *Donnie Brasco* (Mike Newell, 1997) are sometimes dubbed into Sicilian for Italian audiences; Taylor (2006), who highlights that the different dialects and sociolects typically associated with the working class used in the works of British director Ken Loach are neutralised in the Italian dubbed versions; and Dore (2009), who discusses the target-culture approach adopted in the dubbing of the first series of *The Simpsons* and particularly the choice of Neapolitan and Sicilian to translate sociolects and dialects. Additionally, Nolwenn Mingant (2010) sets out to 'look at the codified relationship between a film and its audience, the issue of voice texture, and how dubbing may result in a loss of narrative and thematic construction' (2010: 713). Mingant emphasizes that dubbing involves a double suspension of disbelief. She claims

that 'the notion of willing suspension of disbelief is central to the cinematic art. It is part of a pact with the audience [...] the audience tacitly accepts' (2010: 713) what is shown to them on-screen at face value. In the dubbed version, this suspension of disbelief is doubled as it 'requires that most of the characters should speak French' (ibid.: 715). She explains that 'spectators routinely accept to twice suspend their disbelief, passing over the discrepancy between nationality and language' (ibid.: 717). Indeed, if cinema creates an illusion, dubbing creates 'the illusion of an illusion' (Caillé 1960: 108). Mingant highlights that when translating accents there is a common strategy of neutralization in France and 'most Hollywood male actors tend to have the neutral voice of a man in his late thirties' (ibid. 722). She mentions the example of Jean-Pierre Michaël, who gives his voice to Brad Pitt and has also dubbed Keanu Reeves, Michael Fassbender, Jude Law, Christian Bale, Ethan Hawke and Ben Affleck. What this means is that a French voice talent is hired to dub multiple American, English or Spanish actors, which could prove confusing for viewers. However reception studies, are extremely scarce leaving the door open for further investigation in this area.

Intonation is another aspect that has received very little attention in dubbing, even though there has been a sizeable contribution on the notion of dubbing as prefabricated discourse. Works by scholars such as Chaume (2012), Marzá and Chaume (2009), Whitman-Linsen (1992) and Baños and Chaume (2009) have all commented on the important role of prosody and paralinguistic elements; there remains, however, a lack of actual empirical studies on intonation. A notable exception is the work of Sofía Sánchez Mompeán (2012, 2016 and forthcoming 2018) who so far provides the only empirical studies on prosody, i.e. patterns of stress and intonation. She considers paralinguistic as well as prosodic elements (tonicity, tone, tonality, pitch-direction,

pitch-range, loudness and tempo) in original and dubbed versions in an attempt to demonstrate the importance of pronunciation when establishing meaning. Overall, Sánchez Mompeán explains that intonation is more often than not overlooked and emphasises that dubbed versions are ‘often depleted of the connotative richness transmitted through intonation in the original sitcom’ (2016: 18). Sánchez Mompeán’s work on the importance of intonation demonstrates the importance of investigating not only what people say but how they say it. In dubbing, we are not only dealing with words but also with paralinguistic elements and prosodic features such as intonation, rhythm, timbre and volume. Drawing on Perego and Taylor (2009), Mompeán also highlights that the ‘limited number of dubbing actors does not suffice to provide a colourful repertoire of tones, necessary to convey all kinds of voices and sound convincing’ (2012: 2), a statement reflecting my previous comments on choices of voices.

Finally, in recent years, multilingualism has also become a much discussed topic (e.g. Corrius 2008; Díaz-Cintas 2011; Martínez- Sierra *et al.* 2010 and de Higes Andino *et al.* 2013). In the next section multilingualism is expanded on since it is a rather new development in dubbing research. The next section therefore considers future trajectories of dubbing research as well as the new debates with which scholars are engaging.

4. FUTURE TRAJECTORY AND NEW DEBATES

To start with, it is important to consider new working practices which are expected to change the way we experience traditional dubbing. First of all, there is the development of fandubbing or fandubs which are ‘home-made dubbings of television series, cartoons

(particularly the anime genre) and trailers that have not yet been released in the target language country' (Chaume 2013: 111) and are broadcast on the web. These fandubs are usually created by fans using Windows Movie Maker (WMM). The dubbed versions are produced at home: fans translate, lip-sync and revoice the dialogues, record them in a new soundtrack and upload them back on the web. Fandubs and fandubbing are also referred to as 'fundubs' or 'fundubbing' to emphasise the 'witty and humorous nature of this type of home-grown dubbing' (ibid.). In addition to WMM, fandubbers have been using Adobe Premiere as well as another piece of software called Virtual Dub, an open-source video capture and video processing utility which is free and can also be used with Microsoft Windows. Two other products developed by KIWA are also popular: VoiceQ ADR (Audio Dialogue Replacement) and VoiceQ DUB

(http://www.voiceq.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=46&Itemid=72). These last two pieces of software are commercial however WMM

(<http://www.windows-movie-maker.org/>) and Virtual Dub

(<http://www.virtualdub.org/index.html>) are available free of charge. The fact that some dubbing equipment is easily accessible makes it much easier for fans to produce their own versions and it will be interesting to see what impact fandubbing practices will have on professional dubbing: could there be an introduction of alternative medial constraints related to the different types of synchronisation; i.e. might there be a change in the meticulous work dedicated to lip synch in French dubbing, for instance? And could viewers' perception of these constraints and viewing habits change overtime?

Software is also being developed with the capacity to 'transfer[ing] the physical qualities of actors' voices across languages' (Pérez-González 2014: 23). For instance, the Reel Voice system developed by Voxworks is an example of voice-conversion

technology and allows dialogues in the TL to be recorded and then the pitch of the voice to be manipulated to resemble the original screen actor's voice. Another piece of software, Video Rewrite, can be used to 'automat[ing] the production of audiovisual footage' (ibid.). As such, it uses existing footage to create a new clip of a 'person mouthing words that she did not speak in the original footage' (ibid.: 24). It seems obvious that both software have or will have an obvious impact on dubbing practice but apart from Chaume's (2012) and Pérez-González's (2014) general comments, their use has not been investigated specifically by academics.

Advances in technology, the role of the internet, social media, and new software are not only changing the way dubbing is practiced but the way translation professionals and audience think about dubbing and watch AV material. However there is very little research on this impact and it is hoped that in the years to come scholars will fill in this gap in dubbing research. Let me now turn to the debates and issues scholars have recently been engaging with.

The first significant turn in dubbing research is a call from scholars such as Chaume (2004b and 2012) for a better conversation between Film Studies and Audiovisual Translation Studies through interdisciplinary studies. Closely related to this call for interdisciplinarity are multimodal studies, which have been advocated by various scholars (e.g. Bosseaux 2015, Chaume 2012 and Pérez-González 2007). Generally these scholars claim that in order to get a full or better picture of the dubbing process and what it is that dubbing does we need to engage not only with the linguistic mode but also with the audio and visual components of an AV text when analyzing audiovisual products in translation.

There is indeed a gap to be bridged between Film Studies and Translation Studies, since these two disciplines are not currently communicating extensively on the impact translation has on audiovisual material, be they films, television series, documentaries or video games. There are some exceptions in AVT, such as Chaume (2004 & 2012), who advocates for more convergences between the two fields, as well as a few pioneering pieces of research on film dialogue, scriptwriting, screenwriting and screenplays, notably Aline Remael (2000, 2004 and 2008), Cattrysse and Gambier (2008) and, more recently, Martínez- Sierra (2012). Works by Sanz Ortega on polyglot films (2015) and Bosseaux on characterization and performance (2015) are also worth mentioning as they intend to bridge a gap between AVT and Film Studies with emphasis on multimodality. Indeed it is fair to say that Film Studies and film scholars do not usually pay attention to translation in the film process, with the notable exception of Egoan and Balfour (2004). This is a view also shared within film studies, and not only in film-making. For instance, Nornes (2007: 3-4) in the early pages of *Cinema Babel* reiterates that film studies scholars have for too long failed to consider the implications of translation.

When it comes to multimodality, Bosseaux (2015) for instance, presents a multimodal model to be used to analyse audiovisual material, taking into consideration the acoustic and visual elements that comprise a performance. Her analytical model was created in order to help identify aspects of performance in original audiovisual texts and then in their dubbed versions to then see how dubbing may affect characterization. Through a careful analysis of visual (e.g. body movements, facial expressions), oral (vocal) and linguistic elements, she demonstrates how dubbing has an impact on performance.

The second important new trajectory puts emphasis on the fact that it would be very beneficial for AVT to have more convergences with the film industry. According to Lambourne (2012), only 0.1 per cent–1 per cent of a film’s production budget is devoted to AVT translation (including accessibility). This is a very minimal amount, particularly if we are to consider the revenue of blockbusters worldwide. Romero-Fresco has compiled such information² and explains that:

Best Picture Oscar-winning Hollywood films made between 2001 and 2011 came from foreign markets. Of this, more than three-quarters (80.4% and 76.3%, respectively) was from foreign countries where these films are subtitled or dubbed. The remaining revenue came from territories where the films are shown in English but where some viewers are likely to watch them with AD and especially SDH. (2013: online)

A paradox thus emerges: if translation provides so much of the revenue of a film, why is it so often left as an ‘afterthought rather than a natural component of the film’ (Sinha 2004: 174)? This is not only true of subtitling, Sinha’s focus, but also dubbing, with dubbed versions also ‘suffer[ing] from a lack of means at postproduction stage’ (Lebtahi 2004: 409, my translation). Romero-Fresco (2013: online) explains that in order to make films which are more accessible, filmmakers need to be aware of the impact translation has on a finished product. He therefore argues that, instead of relegating translation at the post-production stage, it needs to be taken into consideration at the pre-production and production stages. Romero- Fresco therefore calls for Accessible Filmmaking (AFM), which he defines as:

the consideration during the filmmaking process (and through collaboration between the translator and the creative team of the film) of some of the aspects that are required to make a film accessible to viewers in other languages and viewers with hearing or visual loss. (2013)

² Data obtained from IMBD, www.boxoffice.guru.com and www.boxofficemojo.com.

Following Romero-Fresco (2013), it seems more than sensible to argue that dubbing should not be confined to the distribution process, but instead form at least part of the post-production process, with directors engaging in conversations with translators, as Stanley Kubrick used to do for instance (Zanotti, forthcoming 2018).

It is promising to see that some changes are already happening in the film industry in the form of creative subtitling (McClarty 2012) and ‘part-subtitling’ (O’Sullivan 2008) in multilingual films, e.g. in blockbusters like *Slumdog Millionaire* (Danny Boyle 2008) and *Inglourious Basterds* (2009), in which ‘subtitles take up as much as 70 per cent of the dialogue’ (Romero-Fresco 2013). Moreover, what Romero-Fresco advocates can be done at a practical level (such as training) as well as a theoretical level (i.e. research) in order to foster better communication between AVT, film making, film studies so that we are all aware of the implications of translation, and practices can be informed both ways between AVT and film (making) studies.

Practically speaking, Romero-Fresco therefore wants to encourage more collaborative work between subtitlers and pre- and post-production teams. Bosseaux’s work (2015), which aims to raise awareness of the impact of dubbing on performance and characterization at a theoretical level, also has practical implications. She claims that if character creation is based on extensive work by actors on their voices, e.g. Daniel Day Lewis in *Lincoln* (Steven Spielberg 2012), that a dubbing crew and particular voice actor only have a few days to reproduce, are we not then going to lose part of what the director intended to portray? Quentin Tarantino, speaking about *Inglourious Basterds* (2009) when it premiered at the Cannes Film Festival, is purported to have said that ‘it does not make sense to dub this film’ (quoted in Mingant 2010: 713). Different characters speak English, German, French and Italian throughout this film and scholars have commented that Tarantino was very much concerned with its fluency (O’Sullivan

2010, Mingant 2010, Sanz Ortega 2015). The use of languages and issues of fluency were therefore part of Tarantino's artistic vision; nevertheless, his film has been dubbed into French, Italian and Spanish. Dubbed versions may have better reception if there is an effort at contextualising what has been done in the dubbed film, e.g. explaining where the characters come from or what their accents are for instance. This is something worth considering since films have to be dubbed or subtitled in order for them to travel the world. Paying more attention to how they are dubbed would therefore represent the first step towards making them more 'accessible', to use Romero-Fresco's term.

5. END OF CHAPTER SUMMARY SECTION

Reading audiovisual products is a complex task. The visual and acoustic elements combine to generate meaning and there are many modalities to consider. Moreover, meaning is not fixed and can – and often will – vary from one audience to the next. Indeed, when audiovisual products travel in translation it is hard to know how they will be received or perceived and it would be unrealistic to expect the same effect to take place with a different audience.

This chapter has shown that the various agents and aspects of dubbing make it a rich and complex process. One of the most common objections to dubbing is that audiences do not get to hear the original voices. Indeed, as early as 1936, Jean Fayard, editor of the French journal *Pour Vous*, commented that audiences can only 'appreciate Wallace Beery, Katharine Hepburn or Clark Gable if they hear their original voice; their gestures, without the intonations that go with them, lose all their significance (1936, my translation). What Fayard is remarking is that, if audiences cannot hear the voices of

actors, there will be a mismatch between what is seen and what is heard and the whole of the performance will cease making sense. That is not to say that voice actors should mimic the intonation of the original, a practice that Chaves (2000) identifies in the Spanish context as 'la curva' and which was used with the first dubbed American films. As Sánchez Mompeán puts it, they should instead 'bear in mind the intended purpose and try to reproduce the same effect by making use of their own patterns, which could indeed coincide in both languages' (2012: 95).

It is fair to say that there are many interesting and valuable studies on dubbing but as we have seen there is still room for further investigation with a focus on interdisciplinarity, multimodality, and more communication between researchers and practitioners. Finally, I would like to end this chapter with a call to scholars researching dubbing outside of Western Europe: dubbing research is running the risk of being viewed as Eurocentric and since dubbing is used all over the world, our research community would greatly benefit to know more about dubbing practices in all the countries with a dubbing tradition or where dubbing practices are emerging.

6. LIST OF RELATED TOPICS IN THIS VOLUME:

History of AVT, multimodality, Sociolinguistics and Linguistic Variation, AVT and Film Studies.

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Filmography

Boyle, Danny (2008) *Slumdog Millionaire*.

Newell, Mike (1997) *Donnie Brasco*.

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8. SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

Bosseaux, C (2015). *Dubbing, Film and Performance: Uncanny Encounters*. Oxford: Peter Lang.

In this book, Bosseaux uses a multimodal approach as she presents a tripartite model that can be used to investigate how oral, acoustic and linguistic elements combine to construct characters in original versions and how these are reconstructed in translation through dubbing.

Chaume, F. (2012). *Audiovisual Translation: Dubbing*. Manchester: St Jerome Publishing.

This handbook presents an overview of dubbing research and practice. It includes various practical exercises that are useful to get more insight into the practice of dubbing.

Pérez-González, L. (2014). *Audiovisual Translation: Theories, Methods and Issues*. London: Routledge.

This book maps key developments in audiovisual translation with a focus on research models and methodological approaches. It covers all areas of AVT including dubbing and is an excellent companion to Chaume (2012).